

14. Integral Humanism: A Holistic Approach to Solve Complex Socio-Economic Developmental Issues of the Nation

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ABSTRACT

India is a nation with history of thousands of years and co-existence of several subsequent philosophies and ideologies. These can be conflicting in nature. Moreover, India has a vast region leading to diversity in every aspect of life. Several stake-holders in the society with their peculiarities are part and parcel of the country. However, we aim for all-round, all-inclusive development of the nation. For it, all the complex and wicked problems have to be understood and the solutions based on certain philosophy should be adopted. This paper is an attempt to relate the theory propounded by Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya in 1964 viz. 'Integral Humanism' as the holistic solution to the complex socio-economic developmental issues of the Nation.

Key Words: Integral Humanism, Holistic Approach, Socio-Economic Development

Need of a Holistic Approach

India is a nation with certain peculiarity of co-existence of centuries-long culture as well as philosophy and the amalgamation of modern technology in the society for an all-inclusive development for betterment of the humanity. India has more than 141 billion population on the fourth largest area in the world, which becomes its strength as well as a weakness sometimes. For achieving all-inclusive and comprehensive development in all the aspects and at all the levels in the country, we require to study the problems or difficulties in achieving the same from a holistic approach. From the same perspective, the solutions also are required to be identified and to be applied in the country.

This concept paper is an attempt to understand these multifarious problems in India and their probable solutions based on a philosophy called as 'integral humanism', proposed in this formal form by Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay in 1964, but which is imbibed in the society, culture and 'Dharma' of the nation from the Vedic or Upanashadic period.

Salient features of India

India has the history of thousands of years. The documented history of India dates back to Indus Valley Civilisation lasting from 3300 BCE to 1300 BCE (Wright, 2009; Dyson, 2018). However, in pre-historic period, the earliest known human remains in South Asia date to 30,000 years ago. Moreover, the settled life in South Asia and Indian sub-continent began around 7000 BCE. (Wright, 2009). Thus, when we start thinking about the nation and various developmental aspects of the nation, we need to understand about different components and the members who are the facilitators and enablers of the growth and development, several aspects of the nation as a system as well as some inherent features from the national history.

Various stake-holders or the members of the Nation-

1. Government and administration
2. Non- governmental organisations (NGOs)

3. Private or Corporate sector
4. Several other institutions in the society
5. Unorganised sector
6. Ordinary citizens, part of either of the above categories, knowingly or unknowingly
7. Ecosystem

All the above sections of the society comprise of the Nation. Each of the sectors has its own peculiarities. They have their own strengths as well as weaknesses, opportunities and threats also stand in way of the national development. Thus, it is required to carry out a SWOT analysis of the nation and recommend the roles and responsibilities of all the sectors accordingly (Mahajan & Agarwal, 2020; Rahman M., 2021).

In India, we observe that the philosophical discourse has led to a good foundation for the action or the *Karma* of *Yajna* to be carried out at different levels of the country. This philosophy also is evident in the ancient literature. In '*Shantimatra*', there is a prayer for the coordination among all the natural powers; in '*Eeshawasyopanishad*', a phrase '*Ten tyaktenbhunjithah*' indicates that one should enjoy what is allotted by Him with renouncement or giving up of own part to others. This philosophy advocates a desire of harmonized life with all the entities in the world. (Tiwari, 2012). Even in the 20th century, Mahatma Gandhi's way of living is the best example of sustainable development of the world. In Mahatma Gandhi's words, "Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need but not any man's greed". (Gupta, 2015, Watve, 2019). SrimadBhagwad Gita focuses on the sacrifice or duty orientation and absence of desire for rewards of an individual in the form of the *Yajna* or the *Karma Yoga*, which are the guidelines for all the citizens in order to make the contributions for the self-development or the emancipation along with the development or aggrandizement of the nation (Thakar, 2004; Mulla, Z. R., & Krishnan, V. R., 2006).

This philosophical background should be kept in mind, while understanding the structure of the nation in and out. Moreover, different facets of the nation as an entity should also be considered. Different issues related to those aspects that are required to be tackled for the development of the nation are also mentioned below –

1. Historical and Cultural
 - a. Have we forgotten our own rich heritage and tradition? Over- importance to the Western philosophy and economy will harm the self-reliance of the country.
 - b. Are we repeating our mistakes from the history like rivalry based on classes or castes? This is a real threat of not learning from the past mistakes.
2. Geographical
 - a. Diversity of the resource- endowment, however, it is unequal as well.
 - b. Problem of reaching the facilities and the opportunities for the development to the remote and farthest regions of the country
3. Social
 - a. Disparity – socially, gender-wise, region-wise etc.
 - b. Health, education and other facilities
 - c. Superstitions
 - d. Lack of patriotism
 - e. Hurdles in national integration

4. Economic
 - a. Corruption and black economy
 - b. Disparity or centralisation- employment opportunities, infrastructural, resource-wise etc.
 - c. International relations
5. Political
 - a. Lack of willpower
 - b. Lack of policy-making with futuristic approach and considering all the sects of the nation together
 - c. Immature democracy
6. Academic or research- related
 - a. Brain-drain
 - b. Less weightage (financial and resource-wise) to basic and applied research
 - c. Optimum utilisation of intelligence for national welfare is not done.
7. Psychological and Spiritual
 - a. Lack of nationalist approach, affinity towards society, empathy, humanist approach, sensitivity etc.
 - b. Definition of satisfaction and utility should also be questioned.

Above list depicts just a sample of the problems concerned in the seven fields mentioned. These are the aspects of any entity or the system in the Nation which are required to be catered to in order to achieve all-round, all-comprising development. And thus, we can conclude that the all-inclusive all-round development of the nation should consider an integrated development of above seven stake-holders in above seven fields at individual as well as collective level. This development can only be the sustainable development. The sustainability creates and maintains those conditions under which humans and nature can co-exist in productive harmony as well as it permits fulfilling the social, economic and other requirements of present as well as future generations. (United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2016). We can refer to all the 17 Sustainable Development Goals by the United Nations. (United Nations, 2015). In India, we should also strive to achieve these goals to achieve Sustainable Development.

Nature of the developmental issues in India

The inherent nature of the country has led to the diversity in all the facets of the societal life. However, it is important to focus on the oneness or the commonality in all these diverse manifestations. Common agenda and common goals would definitely lead to the development and the aggrandizement of the Nation. As Upadhyay (1965) states, it is the non-dualistic philosophy of *Advaita Vedanta*, i.e., oneness of various souls, be it of human, animal or plant origin lasts in the nation, which believes that all human beings share a 'common consciousness of national thought'. In fact, when a group of persons live with a goal, an ideal, a mission and look upon a particular piece of land as their motherland, this group constitutes a nation.

Various issues and the obstacles in the national development explained in earlier section are not only complicated to solve, but are complex or wicked in nature. Some of such complex issues are co-existence of tradition or heritage and modernity, ecology versus economy, or probably sustainable development that thinks of ecology and economy together, and the development of an individual as well as community- development at the same time.

While solving these problems, we require certain ideology and philosophy that can be adopted for achieving goals towards national development. Such philosophers and the people with action are required at once in all the nations. Next section discusses the philosophy propounded by Deen Dayal Upadhyaya in 1964 as a solution of developmental issues in detail.

How can we solve these problems in front of India?

Sharma S.K. & Nain A. (2018) says that Upadhyaya attempts to address most of the issues of contemporary relevance and to provide an alternative perspective to the solutions. Upadhyaya's ideas are well equipped to transform the discourse of conflict resolution in present times and face the challenges of nation-building. Following the same line of thinking, we attempt to find a holistic approach to solve the problems complex and wicked problems of the society and the economy in the form of solutions given by Upadhyaya.

Integral humanism essentially believes in a synergy of individual and society and the universe and the ultimate authority of the Supreme. Every nation, according to Upadhyaya has its own cultural and societal central idea what has been termed as *Chiti* and every society has some peculiarities which could be identified as *Virat*. Laws that help manifest and maintain *Chiti* of a nation are termed as *Dharma* of that nation. It leads to political and social empowerment of all and penetration of economic benefits up unto the last woman/ man standing. The state is brought into existence to protect the nation and to produce and maintain conditions in which the ideals of the nation can be translated into reality. Every individual has different roles carved out and various dimensions of activities. Integrating these varying aspects of human life into a continuous interaction with each other is the essence of integral humanism.

Integral humanism imparts that the economic system should develop our humane qualities and enables us to attain higher level of all-round perfection. Infrastructure is required in which inherent potentialities of man may find highest fulfilment. Six different objectives of Indian economy are identified. Their fulfillment would ensure minimum standard of living along with meaningful employment to every able-bodied person, fulfilment of social requirement as health and education and avoiding the waste as well as extravagance in utilizing natural resources. Development of Bharatiya technology & machines subject to availability & nature of factors of production and the system that helps the individuals protect cultural & other values of life are few more objectives of the economy. According to him, *Swadeshi* (i.e., use of indigenous technology, goods & services, ideology and all) and decentralization policies should be adopted for reconstruction of our economy. He also provides guidelines for ownership based on trusteeship of the industries- public or private.

Overall, we observe that in this philosophy, the individualism and spiritualism are considered together as life is an integrated whole. This is how even the diversity can be looked as the expression of internal unity. Most importantly, qualities like harmony, unity and cooperativeness/ cooperation and complementarity in nature as well as peace and happiness between the Individual and the Supreme Collectivity is expected, that will lead to steady development. Reconciling the nationalism, democracy, socialism and world peace with the traditional values of Bharatiya culture and thinking of all these ideas in an integrated form is the crux for the all-round development of the Nation.

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